

Act 1

Begin Titles with urgent rock music under, superimpose long shots of Vietnam Veterans Monument in Washington. Intercut cu's of various hands placing flowers, making rubbings--music gets angrier under these.

Fade to stock shot of WW 2 war bond rally or the like, people together. Linger on the clothes in grainy stills. March music under until we cut to jitterbuggers.

Go to black. Rock distorted and faster, vaguely recognizable individual singing voices from the era as Peace March fades in

Dissolve to

1 Interior. A studio apartment in New Jersey, 50s in feeling. . FERN and GEORGIA drink coffee. Table contains some notebooks, jar of pencils, pens, markers.

Veterans' Day, November 11, 1986. Morning.

2 MAC into frame. Sits.

FERN: There is a carton of butter pecan in there but it's empty.

3 on MAC

MAC: He's like a kid. Just like a kid'd do.
Put it back empty. I was dying for some. [I'm] not fat enough.
(Some slightly inappropriate or exaggerated
gesture. He holds quite a secret and
wonders how to reveal it.)

4 to quizzical FERN

FERN: He's always alone here. Why put it back empty for himself?

GEORGIA: (hurried) Anyways, little early for ice--

5 to MAC

MAC: Maybe he had somebody from that church committee up or something. (shakes notebooks, etc.) Witness this committee folderal.

6 widen to MAC and FERN (the couple)

FERN: Parable of the empty ice cream carton. Seek and ye shall find--nothing.

7 widen to the three

GEORGIA: (to MAC) Your mother? When I knew her? "I got my mouth set for it!"

she'd always say.

FERN: She set her mouth for about a million desserts. God rest it.

GEORGIA: They say they're the best, the ones with nuts. The...uh...room the nuts take? Better than the sugar and all.

MAC: (aside) And the greatest of these is clarity.

8 on women

FERN: Big fat pecans'll save your life. (Beat) Is it worth it?

MAC: Yes and no, like everything else.

GEORGIA: Hey you get sick of hearing about it. You can't turn around. They think they got you up against a wall or something. I got news. I eat what I want.

9 widen to the three

FERN: Go get 'em GEORGIA baby.

MAC: I don't need it anyway. That's for sure. Well where's Dad gone to? Let's get this road on the show.

10 to bathroom door

GEORGIA: You know.

11 out to the couple

FERN: You're the one who wants to eat and drink coffee anyway.

MAC: And I'm the one always wants to get going, hey GEORGIA?

12 to GEORGIA

GEORGIA: It's your brother I knew, MAC, not you.

MAC: So, I'm contradiction. Lots of go and sit on my ass. Life abounds in in in contradiction and irony. Abounds!

13 to cynical FERN

GEORGIA: Can't tell by me.

FERN: Most of it's predictable. Fashioned by the victim with great neurotic skill.

14 widen to the three

MAC: (a beat) At any rate, while the old man dandies himself up in there we--

GEORGIA: It's nice to see him pay attention to hisself. For anybody. It's a

way to--

MAC: never get anywhere!

FERN: There's time...a lifetime.

MAC: Speak for yourself. Better for me [to] try to hurry up a bit.

GEORGIA: You got older--I mean since I met you that one time with Jimmy. Years ago now--no offense.

MAC: To me it's been.

15 on FERN who has heard it all before

FERN: Just have to learn to cool out when it rages.

MAC: Easy for you to say, Fern m'love, but I've worn out. Going, going, gone. One day you're walking around and--

16 in on FERN

MAC: (cont) the next--

FERN: You're on your knees.

17 to GEORGIA

GEORGIA: You feel that way sometimes.

18 to MAC

MAC: That's okay. It's when you don't feel anything else.

19 to FERN

FERN: It's an infection. You catch it. From other burnouts. Then you have conferences and workshops when you should've had guts.

GEORGIA: That's the way [to] get around 'em, huh? All these workshops.

20 to MAC

MAC: I'm workshopped out for sure, but I've tried guts too. They can handle anything. Stonewall 'em they go around. Butt against them they slide off like shit.

21 to FERN

GEORGIA: You could retire, turn over a new lease.

FERN: Or something like that.

22 widen to the three

MAC: Less than four years to go out that window.

GEORGIA: Window? Why not now? Be my guest.

MAC: Retirement window. It's an expression.
23 on GEORGIA

GEORGIA: (shrugs) I was thinking suicide. What I don't know'd fill a book.

FERN: That's not much.

24 widen to the three

MAC: [And that'll] make twenty-five years at Terrence Allowell. Twenty-five! Staggering!

FERN: Don't tell us about it.

MAC: Then I can reach the middle-class Valhalla--

25 on MAC

MAC: (cont) standing in line for government cheese.

26 cut to three

GEORGIA: What's good about that, the old ducks can't eat (gesturing to door)

27 pan to door

GEORGIA: (cont) but just a little bit of the cheese, you know, so the middleaged kids visit, [and they] go home in the Cadillacs and Olds's with most of it.

MAC: BMW children can't get all the way home with it. You'd think they have the 'couth to write thank-you notes to Ronald Reagan.

28 to FERN

FERN: At the end of every pipeline a fat, wrong mouth.

MAC: (musing) I voted for that Cheese.

FERN: Ronald Roquefort.

29 to MAC

MAC: I was neo-something then--conservative I guess. What's neo mean? Like? I'm always like something.

FERN: It means new which means old.

GEORGIA: What's your whachacallit...? I never found out.

MAC: Nor did I.

GEORGIA: Fern?

30 to xcu FERN

FERN: (to MAC) Fool! His field is--

MAC: Drug Enforcement. And it should include rubber dispensing. Should.

GEORGIA: Never mind.

FERN: You're right. Talking to him isn't worth it.

31 to xcu MAC

MAC: It used to be. Even for me. Tragic.

FERN: Only when you know what's going on.

32 WIDEN to the couple

MAC: Can't even wring my hands anymore. One can't stand the other.

FERN: 'Twas inevitable.

33 to xcu GEORGIA

GEORGIA: After a while you always know, you know. That's the trouble.

34 widen to the three

MAC: The clowns don't run the circus. That's really the trouble.

GEORGIA: I aint so sure about that. (a beat)

35 on GEORGIA

GEORGIA: (cont) LOCAL GIRL WONDERS.

FERN: Ma'm?

MAC: Well these clowns don't. This clown. Tumble on cue (a beat)

36 to MAC rising to do a half-hearted pratfall, gets up from floor to demonstrate:

MAC: (cont) ass out of my seedy, schoolmaster pants.

37 to laughing GEORGIA and disgusted FERN

FERN: You should've become a boozier. [It's] the way they think. Self-pity lowered to an art.

38 to xcu MAC

MAC: Don't know how I missed it, my sweet Fern. But I always said that art is--

GEORGIA: Don't teach. It makes me sad.

39 pull back to the couple

FERN: I don't know that I did miss it.

GEORGIA: I can take a drink or leave it alone. Can almost say the same for men.

MAC: Drove through. Mostly.

FERN: Few stops.

MAC: I remember.

FERN: One separation back in there.

GEORGIA: Didn't know.

FERN: Yeah, nearly (a beat) year.

MAC: [That was] for a lot of things.

40 to xcu GEORGIA

GEORGIA: (two beats) It usually is.

FERN: One prime one.

41 to xcu FERN

FERN: (two beats) A, uh, Mexican difficulty supplied the, excuse the expression, trigger.

MAC: You can't boil anything down. Anything. You just can't. That's what I found out in all these odd years. And don't I mean odd?

FERN: YOU can't.

42 widen to the women

GEORGIA: What's a Mexican difficulty?

MAC: I say yes to women in combat roles!

GEORGIA: I don't think so, but thanks. I'll let you know when we get stupid. What's a--?

43 pan to MAC

MAC: Snipers! Wasting us, wasting each other.

FERN: You only hurt--

44 pull back to the three

MAC: (cont) the hurt you love.

GEORGIA: When I'm with husband, wife...they throw it back and forth--(shrugs, shakes head).

FERN: We better or worse?

GEORGIA: 'Bout the same.

45 on Fern

FERN: Marriage toughens people up.
46 to MAC

MAC: What doesn't strengthen me kills me.

FERN: You got that right.

MAC: World War Two never officially ended. No real peace treaty. Let's drink to it.

GEORGIA: The war or--?

FERN: Any unfinished business.

MAC: Pregnant!